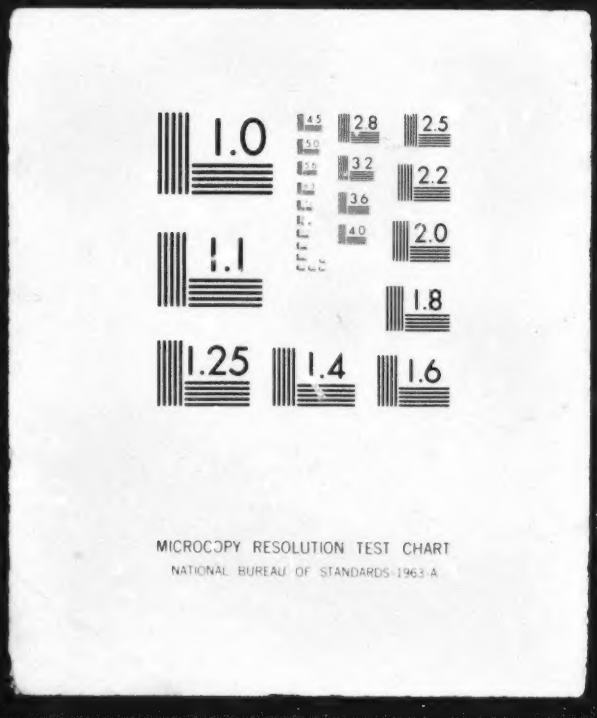
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
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DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

This document is the last in a series of 12 early childhood program descriptions compiled by the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development. The program described here is the Primary Education Project (PEP) developed at the Learning Research and Development Center of the University of Pittsburgh. The PEP project is concerned with the development and evaluation of a model of individualized education for young children which is suitable for implementation in American public schools. To date, experimental materials for nursery school and first, second, and third grade have been developed. PEP concentrates on basic skills and concepts that are prerequisites for future academic subject matter. The PEP curriculum outlines carefully sequenced predetermined steps the child is to progress through at his own rate. If any difficulty is experienced at a step, the instruction is revised until the child has mastered the assignment so that the child never equates difficulty with failure. Included in the program description are brief outlines of: (1) goals and objectives, (2) content and materials, (3) classroom activities, (4) parent involvement, (5) professional and paraprofessional training, (6) administrative requirements and costs, (7) program development and evaluation, and (8) program history and present (1971) status. (JMB)

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Early Childhood
Information Unit
November 1971

Program Summary

PRIMARY EDUCATION PROJECT

Project Director: Lauren B. Resnick

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University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

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The Utah State Board of Education

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The Primary Education Project (PEP) is currently under development at the Learning Research and Development Center of the University of Pittsburgh. The project is concerned with the "development and evaluation of a model of individualized education for young children suitable for implementation in American public schools." To date, experimental materials for nursery school (ages three and four) and first, second and third grade (ages six and seven) have been developed. The program is designed for an urban setting.

The developers hope to create an educational environment that will benefit children from all backgrounds. They believe two things are essential if schools are to meet children's learning needs: the school must develop the child's confidence in his own ability to learn, and help him to become an effective learner.

To meet these requirements, the project staff is developing a carefully sequenced curriculum designed to be adaptable to individual needs and abilities. The PEP curriculum outlines predetermined steps the child is to go through at his own rate. If any difficulty is experienced at a step, the instruction is revised until the child has mastered the assignment. According to the rationale of the program, the child should thus never equate difficulty with failure. This is important because the child who experiences success is more confident and more motivated to learn than the child who meets only failure in the classroom.

CONTENT AND MATERIALS:

PEP concentrates on basic skills and concepts that are prerequisites for future academic subject matter. Three general classes of skills are included in the PEP model: (a) orienting and attending skills, (b) perceptual and motor skills, and (c) conceptual and linguistic skills. The first set of skills includes the ability to concentrate on a task and resist distractions, the ability to follow directions, and the ability to finish a task once it is started. These skills are intended to enable the child to function well in the classroom. Perceptual and motor skills include such things as directional movement, body control, and balance, as well as manipulative and visual and auditory discrimination skills. Conceptual and linguistic skills include classifying, reasoning, plan following, and early mathematical processes. Linguistic skill development focuses on functional language (e.g. asking for assistance, describing objects) and on increasing the accuracy of a child's vocabulary.

To teach these skills PEP has identified and sequenced specific learning objectives and has organized them into four curriculum areas: beginning reading; introductory mathematics; classification and language; and visual, auditory and motor development. There is a behavioral objective for each lesson. These objectives are sequenced by degree of difficulty--from simple to more difficult tasks. A few examples of objectives are:

Orienting and Attending Skills

1.0 Attention span. The child can work at a given task for increasingly extended periods of time.

2.0 Focusing attention. The child can discover and attend to relevant aspects of a stimulus.

Motor Skills

1.0 Basic forms of movement. The child can:

- 1.1 walk at various rates, at an even pace
- 1.2 jump, landing simultaneously on both feet
- 1.3 hop, on either foot
- 1.4 skip, gallop, run, etc.

Classification Skills

1.0 One-dimensional sorting, without noisy attributes. Given an array of objects which differ in only one attribute (e.g., color or function or texture, etc.), sort them into separate categories on the basis of that attribute.

The PEP curriculum requires continual diagnosis of learning needs. Each child is tested frequently. On the basis of the test results, the teacher prepares "prescriptions" or assignments, using such behavioral objectives as are listed above. Assignments indicate the task to be completed and the kinds of materials with which the child will work.

When the child completes his task, he is tested again to see if he attained the objective. He is either given a new assignment if he demonstrates he is ready, or assigned additional work if his test shows the need. This continual testing process insures that each child receives instruction tailored to his own needs. A continuous record of each child's progress is maintained, allowing the teacher to know precisely at what "step" the child is.

As children finish the introductory PEP curricula, they will enter revised versions of the IPI (Individually Prescribed Instruction) mathematics and reading curricula prepared for this purpose by the Learning Research and Development Center Staff.

Because the project is still in a developmental stage, PEP instructional materials are not yet completed and fully tested or ready for dissemination.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES:

The daily activities begin with a "prescription work period" in which the children work on their various assignments. During this period at least one adult, either the teacher or an aide, circulates among the children offering guidance and praise for work well done. The work period is followed by an "exploratory period" in which children choose their own activities from the variety available to them. Typical exploratory activities might be dramatic play or block building. The purpose of this period is "to permit the child to apply his basic skills in a variety of contexts and to stimulate interest in new kinds of learning activities," according to the developer.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

The project staff hopes eventually to train parents to extend the "learning environment" from the classroom to the home. Dr. Resnick states that pilot programs in this area have been promising and future development is under way.

PROFESSIONAL AND PARAPROFESSIONAL TRAINING:

In addition to developing curriculum materials, PEP is exploring means of supervising and training

the teaching staff. The training project is conducted jointly by the Learning Research and Development Center's Learning Laboratory and the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Some of the training materials currently being developed include videotapes.

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS AND COSTS:

Because the project is still in the developmental stage, there is no way of determining the requirements or costs of implementation.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION:

The PEP model is based on current theories that regard intelligence as learned and responsive to experience rather than fixed and inherited (Hunt, 1961, *Intelligence and Experience).* In designing the skill sequences, the PEP staff drew heavily on the work of Piaget *(The Child's Conception of Numbers, The Child's Conception of Geometry,* etc.) and Jerome Bruner *(Toward a Theory of Instruction* and *Studies in Cognitive Growth).* The specific instructional sequences, however, were derived by the developers through behavior analysis of each task, identifying its components and prerequisites. (Resnick, 1967; Resnick, Wang and Kaplan, 1970).

A formal PEP program was first implemented in a classroom setting during 1968-69. It was instituted in Frick Elementary school in urban Pittsburgh. A battery of diagnostic tests developed for PEP was used to assess student progress. The Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test (L-M Form) and three Level I Wide-Range Achievement Tests were also administered. Gains were shown.

The PEP research staff is also developing instruments to measure learning outcomes in the affective domain.

PROGRAM HISTORY AND PRESENT STATUS:

The Primary Education Project (PEP) started in 1967 as a cooperative undertaking of the University of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and the General Learning Corporation. The Learning Research

and Development Center of the University of Pittsburgh is responsible for research and development work; the University's School of Education is responsible for developing inservice and preservice teacher training programs. The General Learning Corporation provided the initial funding for the project. The project is now supported by the Ford Foundation, with additional support from the U.S. Office of Education.

The project staff is continuing to analyze, test, write and retest the PEP program, as well as explore new curriculum areas to add to the current model. As stated, PEP is also trying to develop new methods of parent involvement and to devise training programs that will enable teachers to function effectively in its program.

In addition to the developmental school the PEP program is presently used in four Follow Through school districts and in two Pittsburgh schools. The projected date of completion of the project is 1972.